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A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

"Ay, ay, sir, sometimes. It is not all plain sailing always; but pretty much the contrary, maybe. Very pleasant for fresh water sailors, a smooth sea like this, and sunshine, with all the rest of it;

No. 143, 1854.

but put 'em aboard some dark night, with what you may call a regular sou'-wester, and set 'em to reefing in tops'l, and see what they'll make of it."

The speaker was a weather-beaten mariner; at that particular time he was steering a small plea-

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sure boat, while his auditor was baiting the hooks of a fishing line.

"And you have had your share of that sort of thing, I dare say," said the landsman.

The boatman pointed to a line of breakers a mile or two to seaward. "You have heard of 'the black spine,' I suppose," he said abruptly.

"I can't say that I have," replied the other.

"Well, no matter; that's it then."

"Rocks, perhaps?"

"Yes; you can't see them now the tide's coming in. 'Tis only at low water they show themselves—as ugly a reef as you would wish to see any day; and worse by the other half in the night time."

"Rather dangerous, I suppose?" said the stranger, laconically; "many vessels wrecked there?"

"Why, you see, there's no vessel has any business there, hugging the shore so close as that, just in the bay, with the lights to warn it off. A skipper must be mad to run in here, night or day; but then, there are mad skippers. I have seen one vessel wrecked there, anyhow."

"When was that? and how?" asked 'fresh-water,' pulling up his line, and relieving the hook of a whiting.

"As for the when, it was nine-and-twenty years ago come November; as for the how, that's more than anybody knows, for there wasn't a soul of the crew left to tell the story. I was aboard of her, too, after she struck."

"How was that?" asked the landsman, with an awakening interest in the conversation.

"I'll tell you, sir," said the mariner; and, except that it may lose somewhat of its interest by being dribbled through the pen of a "fresh-water," this is his story:—

"It was as cold, sharp, and blustering a November evening as you would wish to see, sir. The wind was blowing great guns, and the rain was coming down in good trim. I was a young chap then; hadn't been long spliced—not above a year or so: our first young one was asleep in the cradle, and its mother had drawn up to the fire; and says she, 'How glad I am, Tom, you aren't out to-night.' I had part share then in a small boat; and I and my partner were to have been afloat that night, fishing, if the storm hadn't come on.

"It wasn't five minutes after she said that, that I heard a gun, and after that, another; and while I was listening the door of my cottage was opened, and in came my partner Larkins. 'Tom,' said he, 'there's a craft of some sort or other on the black spine yonder.'

"I wasn't long putting on my rough and ready, I can tell you, and was just going out o' doors, when Esther clapped me on the arm. Poor girl, she was pale as a sheet, and 'Tom,' she says, 'don't—don't!'

"'What?' said I, 'not if there's any poor souls in danger, and I can help save 'em?'"

"'I didn't think of that,' said Esther; 'but, whatever you do, take care of yourself, for my sake,' she said, 'and his'—and she pointed to the cradle.

"Well, sir, I promised I wouldn't run into any danger if I could help it. Just then another gun

came booming across the water, and I could see the flash. 'That's from the black spine,' I said, 'sure enough'; and I gave Esther just one kiss, and followed Larkins down to the beach. It wasn't a pleasant thing by any means. The waves were coming in three abreast, and dashing up the spray enough to blind one; and to windward was a gathering of wild black clouds that showed there was more storm to come yet. Some of our people were on the beach looking out; but that was all they were doing.

"'Tom,' said Larkins, laying his hand on my shoulder, poor fellow—'Tom, ours is a tough boat.' That was all he said, but I knew what he meant. He was a brave fellow, sir, as ever steered, and none the worse for being religious, though he had to bear a good deal because of it. 'Tom, ours is a tough boat,' said he.

"'Ay, tough enough,' I said; 'and if we could get her fairly afloat, and well manned, something might be done, perhaps.'

"Well, sir, to make short work of the story, we did get the little craft afloat at last; but not a man was there to join us. They all cried out that we were mad to think of getting out to the black spine such a night as that; and what could we do when we got there? But it didn't matter. 'Pull away, Larkins,' I said; for we didn't dare put up a sail; and a few strokes of the oar carried us a good bit from shore. I shall never forget that minute, sir; it was too dark to see much that was going on; but just then I heard a scream, and a cry of 'Tom, Tom.' It was poor Esther, my young wife. Somebody had gone to my cottage and told her what was going on; and she had run down, half beside herself, though whether 'twas to stop me from going, or to say, 'Go, and God bless you,' was more than she could rightly have told, mayhap. I stood up in the boat, and shouted out as cheerfully as I could; and then we began to pull away again in right earnest. Our little boat stood it bravely, and floated like a cork, though we had shipped water enough at first to make us in doubt whether we should ever get to the rocks; but when we were right out, she was like a seagull on the waves. Of course we didn't waste much time talking; but just one word or two Larkins spoke.

"'Tom,' said he, 'I am a'most sorry I tempted you to this trip. If anything happens there's nobody much to miss me; but you have a young wife and baby.'

"Well, sir, you may suppose I had been thinking about Esther and the young one too; but before I could say a word another gun was fired from the vessel, which we now and then caught sight of when our boat was on the top of a wave.

"I don't know how long a time it was; but we neared the wreck at last, and they hove us a line to make fast by. The rocks were well under water then, for the tide was in, and our little craft floated alongside of the vessel to leeward; and somehow I managed to board her, leaving my partner to take what care he could of the boat. It was a bad move that, sir, as it turned out; for the men aboard were all beside themselves, some with drink, and some with fear.

"The wreck was a middling-sized brig, a foreigner—that was plain enough; and it was

plain enough, too, that it was all over with her. It was wonderful to me how she had lived so long, for she was stove in at the bow, and her stern hung over deep water; but she was settling down fast, and the crew were crowded together in the fore part, except one or two who were hanging on to the shrouds.

"There was not much light; but there was enough to show that no time was to be lost, and the brig's crew saw that too. It was no use; I shouted and shouted, but one after another they sprang over the side of the wreck, some into the boat, and some into the sea. It was not five minutes, sir, before the deck was cleared. How many there had been aboard I couldn't tell, nor how many missed a footing in the boat, and were washed away without giving a chance of saving them; but when I looked down, there was our little bark, sunk almost down to the gun', and the madmen crowding and tumbling one upon another. I saw at once how it would be, and I hailed them as loud as I could, and begged some of them to come back again. You see, sir, there would have been some hope then. The wreck might have held together for a while, and in two trips it would have been cleared. But whether the men did not hear me, or didn't heed, I can't say; or perhaps they did not understand me, for, as I said, I could see they were foreigners: let that be as it may, there was not one to listen to reason. When I found that, sir, I called to my poor partner to quit the boat; for, bad as it was, there was more hope of life by keeping to the wreck. I always thought he did make a move, sir, towards the brig; but it was too late: there came just then a swell, the line parted, the boat floated off, and I was alone on the wreck.

"In another minute, sir, I lost sight of the boat as it floated away heavily. I had not any hope for it: I knew what it could do; but in such a sea as that, and loaded as it was, I knew it could not hold on. And I was right, sir: it wasn't another minute before I heard such shrieks as I hope I shall never hear again. The wind and the dashing of the waves against the wreck was loud and bad enough; but above all rose that shriek. I stopped my ears, sir: I couldn't bear it.

"Till then, I had not had much time to think, all had passed so rapidly; but now, what was I to do? There I was, sir, alone, with the ship's timbers groaning like a thing in agony, and parting beneath me. No help near: I knew 'twas no use to look for it. It was getting darker, too, every minute: for before, there had been a moon, though it was behind the clouds; but it was going down; and all round were the waves beating and dashing against the poor wreck, and threatening every moment to sweep it off the hold it had somehow got upon the rocks. What was I to do, sir?"

"I trust you remembered who it is," replied the landsman—whose fishing tackle was for the time unheeded—"who it is that 'holds the waters in the hollow of his hand.'"

"I prayed that night and that hour, sir," resumed the boatman, "as I had never prayed before. 'I besought the Lord,' sir," as David says, "and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' But it was a hard struggle for life, sir, that I had."

"How did you escape?" inquired the listener.

"It was a mercy," resumed the seaman, "that the wind began to sink a little; but the rain poured down heavily, and the waves rolled in great heavy swells. Anyhow, I did not expect to see the morning, for it seemed certain that at the falling of the tide the wreck would lurch over and sink like a stone.

"Just that thing happened, and sooner than I expected. I had only time to jump overboard when I felt her going; and by God's mercy, sir, I got fast hold of a point of the rock that was then above water. I clung to it for dear life; how I managed I can't think to this day, for my senses were almost gone for the time; and it seemed as if all the waves of the sea were pulling at me to get me under. By the time I came to, I found myself on my knees, with the rock under me, and the waves every moment dashing over my head. Well, sir, I managed to raise myself on my feet, and turned round to look for the wreck; but she was gone.

"Through the rest of that night I was on the rock, just able to hold on; but I believed that when the tide came in again it would be all over with me. I cannot tell you what my thoughts were, sir: I seemed like in a dream. Well, morning came at last, and then the tide was rising again. 'This is the last morning I shall ever see,' I remember thinking that, and thinking too, of poor Esther. It was a strange notion; but my mind would keep running upon how it would be when my body was picked up, may be, and carried ashore—who would break the news to Esther, and what would be said; and then I fancied I saw her in widow's weeds, and the little one all in black; and then I could not help laughing to myself at my queer fancies, as if it would matter to me how these things went. How long I might have gone on in this way I can't tell, if I had not soon had something else to think about.

"It was a black speck on the water, sir—no bigger than a hat it looked. I watched it, and watched it, and it came nearer and nearer. It was our boat, sir, bottom upwards.

"I was not much of a swimmer, but thinks I, there's some hope now; and I managed to get off my shoes and heavy jacket, and struck out to the poor old boat. It was about time I left the rock; in another half hour I should have been washed away.

"I reached the boat, sir, pretty nearly exhausted, and clung to it till I had got breath and strength to raise myself on to its hull, which I did at last."

"And then you felt yourself safe?"

"Ay, for a little while I fancied something of the sort; but you may give a guess, perhaps, that I should have felt a trifle safer if I had been ashore—"

"Where you were being drifted, I hope."

"I hoped so, sir, and kept up a good heart for awhile; but by and by the tide turned again, and I knew I was going farther and farther out to sea; and there was not a sail within sight. You may not think it, sir, but I felt as if I could cry like a child. I was faint with fatigue, and dried up with thirst, and I almost envied my poor partner his fate—leastways, if I had been as ready to die as he was."

"All that day, sir, I was on the water, holding

on to the old boat. It was a dark gloomy day; but that was a mercy: if the sun had been hot upon me, I should have gone mad, I think; as it was, I was only chilled to the bones, while the showers that now and then fell, if they soaked me to the skin, they helped me to quench my thirst.

"About noon that day I looked round and saw a sail, maybe a couple of miles to windward. I need not say how I watched it, and what I would have given to have been within hail. It came nearer, and I shouted—nearer still, and I shouted again. I thought they heard me, for in a minute or two the ship's course was altered a point or so. I kept hailing, sir, till my voice was gone; and then I saw the vessel—a schooner—sailing off, when there wasn't, maybe, half a mile between us.

"That afternoon, another sail, and then another passed me, but too far off for me to make myself heard, while I knew I was being drifted every minute further out to sea.

"It was getting towards dusk, and I was nearly perished with cold and hunger. A sort of feeling came over me, sir, that it was no use to hold on any longer. It was better to die at once than to die by inches in that way. I think my senses wandered, or perhaps I swooned; I can't say; but I know I had hold of the keel with both hands, and my head was across my arms, when, all at once, the flapping of a sail roused me, and then I heard a shout, 'A-hoy there—boat a-hoy!'

"I never heard such a blessed sound as that in my whole life, sir, before or since—never. You may think how it put life into me. In five minutes more I was safe on board the vessel, that had pretty near been running me down. She was a coal brig.

"Well, sir, three days afterwards I was landed, fifty miles more from home. You may guess that I was not longer on the road than I could help. It was towards nightfall that I stepped up softly to the cottage door. A light was burning, and the curtains were not drawn. I looked in, sir. There was poor Esther, pale and thin with grief and watching, nursing our little one and hushing it to sleep. Beside her was a neighbour busy at needlework, and on the table was a heap of black stuff and crape. I did not wait to see any more; the next minute poor Esther was in my arms. A happy night that was for us, sir."

A RAMBLE BELOW BRIDGE.

In all those districts of London which lie below the bridges, the aspects of social life, whether those of commerce, of pleasure, or of comfort, differ essentially from anything and everything we meet with habitually around the centres of ordinary traffic, or in the more pretentious and refined localities which stretch away from them to the west and the north. This difference is the more perceptible and the more characteristic the farther eastward we pursue the course of the river and note the social and material manifestations abounding on its muddy banks. We propose, with the reader's permission, to take an occasional short ramble through some of these districts, half maritime, half mercantile, and all peculiarly metropolitan,

and to jot down a few memoranda by the way for his information and amusement.

It does not much signify where we commence—so, taking advantage of an accidental arrival at London Bridge on a fine June morning, we plunge into Tooley-street, which, since the creation of the huge railway station in its vicinity, has undergone a marvellous transformation for the better—and diverging through an outlet to the left towards the end of it, soon find ourselves penetrating a series of narrow, gloomy, and unfragrant channels of brick and wood, running in a very uneven parallel with the course of old Father Thames. We are reminded by unmistakable odours, that here, and in similar unfavoured spots, cholera first steps ashore in his mission to depopulate the squalid homes where lurk, in half unconscious discomfort, the subjects of hard-labour, of hard living and too often, unhappily, of hard drinking. Here and there, at frequent openings, a square strip of the river, flashing beneath the rays of a mid-day sun, breaks in suddenly upon the gloom, making it darker still, by contrast, in the close thoroughfares where huge piles of brick warehouses, rising sixty or seventy feet in height, and standing hardly ten feet apart, shut out all but a ribbon of the blue sky. Their swarms of glassless windows stand open like dove-cotes, and to the music of the grinding, creaking crane, worked by invisible hands, bales and bags are ascending and descending from and to the heavy waggons which choke up the passage beneath. Then comes a succession of wharves, piled with rough merchandise which needs no warehousing—mountains of slate in masses, huge unwrought lumps and slabs, or split into house tiles, or hewn into building ornaments, consigned to London from the quarries of Devonshire—mines of coal—vast cargoes of Portland stone and Scotch granite—marble from the Mediterranean—myriads of bricks—forests of timber, etc., etc.—and mingled with them all, or projecting high over our heads as we walk, the white yards and sprits of coasting vessels, on which the sails flap idly in the breeze. Next comes a series of nondescript sheds, reared of various height, with tarry staves and timbers, and only half roofed in with similar materials. Within is heard the din of labour, the sharp rap of hammers, the crashing saws and the blows of the axe—coopers are hooping their staves together, or shaving them to a fit shape, or splitting long green branches for hoops, or firing the casks and driving home the encircling bands—boat-builders are hammering away at a long boat, a pinnace, or a cock-boat, or painting, or pitching, or caulking, or laying a keel, or fitting a rudder, or adjusting seats for the rowers—blacksmiths are banging at the anvil, and ship-carpenters are sonorous with the saw and axe. From a pitchy dilapidated door an ancient Jack Tar emerges, hitching up his waistband, drawing his tobacco-box from his pouch, and carefully excavating with black forefinger a segment of "pig-tail." Over his shoulder we obtain a temporary view of a little dry-dock, where a very antique-looking coaster, of some three hundred tons burden or so, has been warped in to undergo repairs. The poor thing has been buffeting about, it is evident, for the last fifty years, in all weathers, in channel and estuary, and river and open sea, and is one mass of

bruises and patches and ghastly wounds and rents, whose histories, if we did but know them, would embrace many a tale of weary night-watching and battling with the elements, and of stern and manly endeavour and endurance. But here she is in hospital, to be doctored once more for the stormy sea; and twenty brawny fellows, with saw and auger, and ponderous axe and hammer, are probing and peppering away at her poor laboured ribs, administering tonics in the shape of iron bolts and cramps, and applying the actual cautery by means of blazing pitch. With our best wishes for the future career of the "Nancy," we walk on—past more warehouses redolent of musty grain—past more sheds resounding with the noises and voices of labour—past a cooper chopping away at one stave and bawling away at another—past watermen's stairs where stockingless Poor Jack paddles up to the calves in mud—past wharves and yards smelling of oil and tallow—past unnumbered public houses fronting them, and smelling of stale beer and tobacco—and then away from the river side, through thoroughfares gradually widening and purifying, and so by degrees into Rotherhithe.

Rotherhithe, though lying low, and far too near the level of the river at high tides, wears a pleasant aspect on the whole. Unlike central London, it is not inconveniently crowded, save here and there on the water's edge, with the dwellings of the poor. Parts of it, like many a pleasant town in the country, have a semi-rural character—the green trees are seen rising over the house-tops, and garden-grounds, in a more liberal proportion than prevails in most of the London suburbs, give a breathing space to the inhabitants. Here are the homes of thousands of our navigators and seamen, now abroad in our service, and the spot, on the whole, is one not discreditable to a seaman's taste, independent of its contiguity to the river, which no doubt has made it his home—and here many seamen and pilots, as the grave-stones tell us, have taken up their last rest within sound of the tidal wave. In Rotherhithe, that old salt-water hero, Benbow, was born in the year 1650, in the street now known as Hanover-street. In Rotherhithe, too, was buried the amiable and unfortunate prince Le Boo, son of the king of Goo-roo-rra, an island in the South Seas. In the churchyard of St. Mary's, which stands not far from the river, and very near to the entrance to the Thames Tunnel, stands a handsome monument raised by the East India Company to his memory: the inscription records the humane and kind treatment afforded by the father of the prince to the crew of the "Antelope," which was wrecked off the island of Goo-roo-rra on the night of the 9th August 1783. The prince, as many of our readers will recollect, came to this country with the intention of benefiting his people by carrying to them on his return the arts of civilization, but was unfortunately seized with the small-pox, and died. St. Mary's church, which was built in 1715, is a handsome edifice, and well fitted for the accommodation of a large congregation.

On leaving the church we dive into the tunnel, not remaining very long at the top of the shaft in admiration of the quasi frescoes adorning the different panels round the upper gallery. There is a sound of music below, rendered discordant by

the redundant reverberation of the shaft; we imagine it to proceed from a brass band, but find, on descending, that it all comes from a couple of performers, one of whom pumps at a concertina while the other blows in a cornopean. The tunnel, gigantic and marvellous achievement though it be, seems already to have sunk almost to forgetfulness. A few loungers idle along its white-washed arch, or pause for a space cheapening the toys and curiosities on the stalls. A puppet-show occupies a space in the centre, and claims attention by grinding a piano by means of a miniature steam engine. Extremely dead and flat is the whole affair to-day, and it is difficult not to feel that a colossal blunder was committed in burying such a vast amount of capital beneath the bed of the Thames, for a result which, as far as utility is concerned, does not yet equal that of a stout ferry-boat which might have been built for fifty pounds. We are not denying that the tunnel is a miracle of engineering skill and daring; but we are not singular in deplored the application of so much wealth and talent to an object which, beyond the mere glory of its achievement, is nearly barren of results.

A few minutes' walk after leaving the tunnel brings us into Ratcliffe Highway, where the mixed population of the district is significantly indicated by the character of the goods, which, in a thousand commercial repositories, invite their selection. Slops and ready-made raiment form a principal part of the staple, and, among these, bear-skin over-coats, pea-jackets, and sou'-westers of every shape, size and colour, and of every manufactureable price, cut a conspicuous figure. Judging from the facial phenomena visible among the clouds of garments, a pretty large proportion of these preserves are tenanted by Jews; and so, we take it, are not a few of the dusty shops where foreign coin is exchanged, nuggets are purchased, and chronometers warranted to show Greenwich mean time are offered for sale at the price of a few pounds. Then there are out-fitting shops for emigrants, where tools, and tents, and sea-chests, and telescopes, and bowie-knives, and fire-arms, and a score of those indispensable things without which it is supposed impossible for a pedestrian to seek his fortune in the bush, are to be had at the very lowest figure. Revolvers, cutlasses, daggers, and deadly weapons, together with quadrants and sextants, are plentiful in a hundred windows, and are often carelessly piled up with watches, rings, brooches, and jewellery, and the thousand and one little nick-nacks in which Jack so often spends his hard-earned wages when he returns with his pocket full of money from a long voyage. The dense population from the courts and lanes, which in fine weather swarms into Ratcliffe Highway, is of a very mixed and indiscriminate class. They consist very largely of females of all ages and grades, and among them we observe an unusual proportion of people of colour, principally of African negroes or their descendants. The negro is here too in the character of a sailor, and we have it on good authority, that, when selected with judgment and properly trained, he makes an excellent foremast man, and has never been found to show the white feather either in battle or storm. Of the vast numbers of families inhabiting this neigh-

bourhood some idea may be formed from the number of the provision shops of every kind which abound, while the amount of traffic which they constantly carry on is suggested to the spectator by the plethoric accumulations of their stores. The whole district is a swarming hive of life and animation, differing as much from the genteel and tranquil abodes of the West-end as the foaming, splashing, and tumbling of a cataract do from the still waters of an inland lake.

But what is this? King David's Lane! Then, if the map has not deceived us, we are not far from Shadwell railway-station; and, sure enough, yonder goes a train to Blackwall! In two minutes we have deposited ourselves in a railway carriage—and thus ends our first excursion to the world **BELOW BRIDGE.**

THE BEAVER IN CANADA.

To see the beaver to advantage, we must study his habits as he exists in North America, where his skin forms so important an article of commerce, and where he appears to be so much respected, that in Canada he figures in the national shield, as an emblem of industry and sagacity. The following notice, indeed, from the columns of a Canadian journal, would represent him as a sort of model lumberer or backwoodsman, whose provident and temperate habits might with advantage be imitated by those settling on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

"One cannot fail to be struck with admiration and astonishment on visiting the haunts of the beaver, nor can we wonder that the red men should place him at the head of animal creation, or make a Manitou of him, when Egypt, the mother of the arts, worshipped such stupid and disgusting deities. Whether you call it instinct, or whether it is to be called reason, one thing is certain, that if half of humanity were as intelligent, as provident, as laborious, and as harmless as the beaver, ours would be a very different world from what it is.

"The beaver is the original lumberman and the first of hydraulic engineers. Simple and unostentatious, his food is the bark of trees, and his dwelling—a mud cabin, the door of which is always open, but under water—conditions which secure retirement, and are favourable to cool contemplation. The single object of his existence being to secure bark enough for himself and family, one would suppose there would not be much difficulty in that; but as neither beaver nor any other animals, except man, are addicted to works of supererogation, we may be sure that the former in all his laborious arrangements—and those too which alter the face of nature to such an important degree—does no more than is absolutely necessary for him to do. Cast in an inhospitable climate, nearly the whole of his labour is for the purpose of laying in his necessary winter supplies, and water is the only medium by which he can procure and preserve these. Too highly civilized for a nomadic life, he builds permanently, and does not quit his habitation until driven from it, like other respectable emigrants, by stern necessity. We cannot better illustrate the habits of this interesting animal than by accompanying a beaver family, on some fine evening in May, in search of a new home. The papa beaver, with his sons and sons-in-law,

wife, daughters and daughters-in-law, and it may be grandchildren, sallies forth "prospecting" the country for a good location—that is, a stream of easy navigation, and having an abundant supply of their favourite food, the silver birch and poplar, growing as near the river as possible. Having selected these "limits," the next step is to place their dwelling so as to command the greatest amount of food. For this purpose they go as far below the supplies as the character of the stream will permit. A pond of deep still water being an indispensable adjunct to their dwelling, this is obtained by the construction of a dam, and few engineers could select a site to produce the required result so efficiently and economically. The dam and dwelling are forthwith commenced, the materials employed in both being sticks, roots, mud and stones, the two former being dragged by the teeth, the latter carried between the fore paws and the chin. If the dam is extensive, whole trees are gnawed down, the largest of which are of the diameter of an ordinary stove pipe, the stump being left standing about eighteen inches above the ground, and pointed like a crayon. Those trees which stand upon the bank of the stream they contrive to drop into the water as cleverly as the most experienced woodman: those which are more distant, are cut up by their teeth into pieces, which can be dragged to the water. These trees and branches are floated down to the site of the dam, where they are dragged ashore and placed so that the tops shall be borne down by the current, and thus arrest the descending *detritus* and form a strong and tight dam. Critical parts are built up 'by hand,' the sticks and mud when placed receiving a smart blow from the beaver's tail, just as a bricklayer settles his work with the handle of his trowel. The habitation or hut of the beaver is almost bomb-proof; rising like a dome from the ground on the margin of the pond, and sometimes six or eight feet in thickness in the crown. The only entrance is from a level of three or four feet under the water of the pond. These precautions are necessary, because, like all enterprising animals, the beaver is not without enemies. The wolverine, who is as fond of beaver tail as an old nor'wester, would walk into his hut if he could only get there; but having the same distaste for water as the cat, he must forego the luxury. It is not, however, for safety that the beaver adopts the submarine communication with his dwelling, although it is for that he restricts himself to it. The same necessity which compels him to build a dam, and thus create a pond of water, obliges him to maintain communication with that pond when the ice is three feet thick upon its surface. Living upon the bark of trees, he is obliged to provide a comparatively great bulk for his winter's consumption; and he must secure it at the season when the new bark is formed, and before it commences to dry; he must also store it up where it will not become frozen or dried up. He could not reasonably be expected to build a frost-proof house large enough to contain his family supply; but if he did, it would wither, and lose its nutriment: therefore he preserves it in water. But the most remarkable evidence of his instinct, sagacity, or reason, is one which I have not seen mentioned by naturalists. His pond

we have seen must be deep, so that it will not freeze to the bottom, and so that he can communicate with his food and his dam, in case of any accidents to the latter requiring repairs: but how does he keep his food—which has been floated down to his pond—from floating, when in it, and thus becoming frozen in with the ice? I said, that in gnawing down a tree the top of the stump was left pointed like a crayon: the fallen tree has the same form, for the beaver cuts like the woodman, wide at the surface, and meeting in an angle in the centre, with this distinction—the four-legged animal does his work more uniformly, cutting equally all around the log; while the two-legged one cuts only from two opposite sides. Thus every stick of provender cut by the animal is pointed at both ends, and when brought opposite his dwelling he thrusts the pointed ends into the mud bottom of his pond sufficiently firm to prevent their being floated out, at the same time placing them in a position in which the water has the least lift upon them; while he carefully apportions his different lengths of timber to the different depths of water in his pond, so that the upper point of none of them shall approach near enough to the surface to be caught by the winter ice.

"When the family are in comfortable circumstances, the winter supply nicely cut and stored away, the dam tight, and no indications of a wolf-terre in the neighbourhood, the patriarch of the hut takes out the youthful greenhorns to give them lessons in topographical engineering; and in order to try the strength of their tails encourages them to indulge in amateur damming. The beaver works always by night; and to 'work like a beaver,' is a significant term for a man who not only works earnestly and understandingly, but one who works late and early.

"From what has been said it will be readily seen that the maintenance of the dam is a matter of vital importance to the beaver. Some say that the pilot beaver sleeps with his tail in the water in order to be warned of the first mishap to the dam; but as there is no foundation for such a cool assertion, it may be set down as a very improbable tale. The Indians avail themselves of this well known solicitude to catch them: having broken the dam, the risk is immediately perceived by the lowering of the water in the hut, and the beaver, sallying forth to repair the breach, is slaughtered in the trenches.

"As the supply of food in the vicinity of the dam becomes diminished the beaver is obliged to go higher up the stream, and more distant from its banks, to procure his winter stores; and this necessity gives rise to fresh displays of his lumbering and engineering resources. In consequence of the distance, and the limited duration of the high water period favourable to transport, the wood is collected into a sort of raft, which, a lumberman asserts, is manned by the beaver and steered by its tail, in the same manner as Norway rats are known to cross streams of water. When the raft grounds, forthwith a temporary dam is thrown across the stream below the 'jam,' by which the waters are raised, and the raft floated off, and brought down to the dam, which is then torn suddenly away, and the small raft thereby flushed over the adjoining shallows."

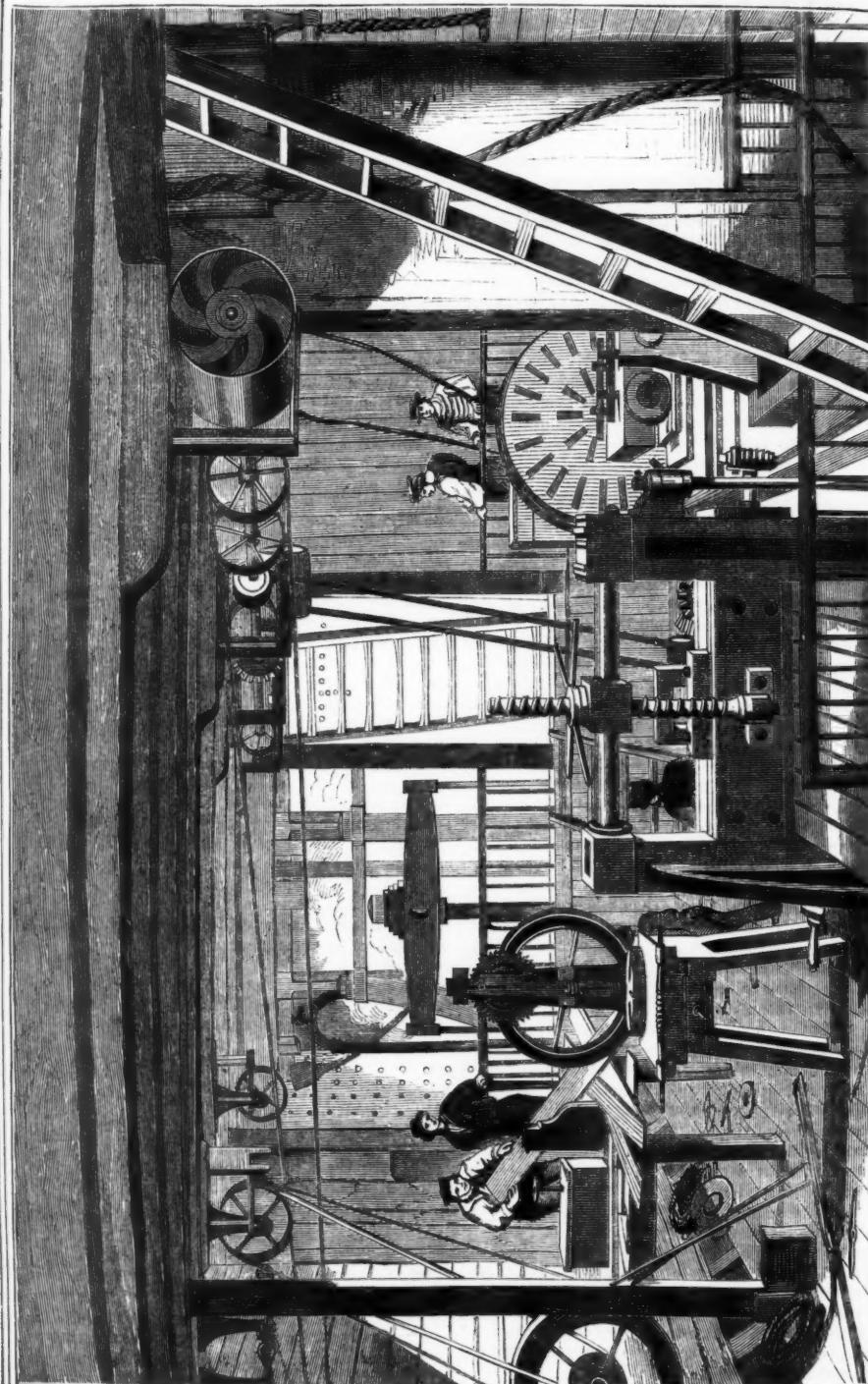
THE "VOLCANO" FLOATING WORKSHOP.

We object to the form of expression, much employed now-a-days, by which the modern art of warfare is represented as *humane*. Except one chooses to interpret the word humanity in its most obnoxious sense, there surely can be no humanity associated with the grim attributes of war. Disguise the subject as we will; overlay it with gentle names; keep in the back-ground all unpleasant images of scattered limbs and quivering flesh; drown the shrieks of mutilated and dying soldiers in the louder blasts of military music, shrill trumpet calls, or the noisy tattoo; speak of the glory, the pomp, the parade of war; veil behind the dark thunder-cloud of roaring artillery all the horrors of a charge—all that would cause us to view the corpse-strewn battle field, with an intensification of the same feeling wherewith we should view a murdered victim by the way-side—still a moment's reflection brings us to understand the true aspect of war.

Modern warfare *humane*! We venture to advance the proposition that modern warfare, so far from being more humane, approaches more nearly than ancient warfare to the extreme of evil unalloyed. Ancient warfare consisted, for the most part, of fiery onslaughts of man to man, each struggling for his own personal safety. The science of ancient warfare was restricted, for the most part, to the battle-field itself—if indeed we may call that science which was little more than the exercise of physical strength. It borrowed but little from the civilian's stores of knowledge, nor did it ask the philosopher to contribute to its destructiveness. How does the case stand now? Why, instead of being confined to the military parade and the field of war, the modern military art adopts the suggestions and borrows the resources of our noblest sciences, applying them to its own fell purposes. No sooner was a convenient fulminating powder discovered, than the insignificant looking though deadly percussion cap increased the powers of the musket at least one-half. No sooner did the discovery of guita percha afford a ready means of flashing the electric charge through an indefinite length of wire, than the discovery became forthwith applied to facilitate the explosion of mines; and as if it were purposely to demonstrate that knowledge, though ever powerful, may be the power of evil or of good, according to its mode of application, the electric current thus employed for the explosion of mines was simultaneously threading the nations of civilized Europe and America with lines of whispering wires. One and the same electric impulse might spring a mine, hurling thousands into eternity, and, passing on, communicate the intelligence to their friends.

To us there is something terrible in this thoughtful, deliberate application of science to the purposes of war; something farther removed from the characteristics of humanity than the impetuous exercise of animal fury displayed on the battle-fields of yore. The one seems more like murder, wary, deliberate, *prepense*; the other like manslaughter under provocation.*

* Surely our correspondent in his reasoning omits to advert to an obvious distinction between the two systems of warfare.



THE "VOLCANO" FLOATING WORKSHOP.

Let us not be misunderstood. We are no advocates for any particular warlike system. We cannot enter into the spirit, or appreciate the motives of those ancient ordinances of various popes, defining the instruments of death only lawful to be used by this or that class, or community of men. We could never see the nice shade of difference, in a moral sense, between cutting off a man's head with a sharp sword, or cracking his *occiput* with a heavy mace. Certain popes, however, could appreciate this moral difference, otherwise they would not have restricted fighting prevalent to the use of the mace, because, forsooth, that class was forbidden to spill blood. Still more difficult is it for us to understand why another pope should have interdicted the use of the crossbow, as being an instrument unfitted for *Christian warfare*.

We have been led into this train of thought by a recent visit to the "Volcano" floating workshop, fitted out by Mr. Nasmyth, at the request of the Admiralty, for the purpose of being stationed in the Baltic to aid the steam fleet in facilitating any repairs which may be required. After receiving on board a large number of letters and newspapers, together with about 10,000*l.* in specie, for the use of the fleet, she sailed from Woolwich on the 30th of July last—a perfect novelty of the kind, we believe. The "Volcano" is supplied with lathes, planing machines, a steam hammer, forges, and all the other necessary appliances for the repairs of complex machinery; and the visitor can scarcely regard the beautiful triumphs of mechanical science which the vessel contains, without being reminded of the cool, deliberate malice *prepense* characteristic of modern warfare, which, no longer content with the practical aids and theoretical suggestions of science at home, must needs bid science pack up her traps and establish a workshop on the deep.

Taking the peculiarities of this present war into consideration, there is much reason to apprehend that the "Volcano's" mechanical aids will be required. The expectant world has still to ascertain to what extent steam ships are competent to bear the shock of modern warfare. In the earlier days of naval steam-vessels, much anxiety was felt for their exposed machinery and large paddle-wheels. So far as relates to screw vessels, part of that anxiety has been removed. Their machinery is altogether below the water line, so in like manner is their screw, and, consequently, is far removed from the reach of horizontally fired projectiles, especially when discharged from the batteries of ships. There is no such immunity, however, from shot and shell fired from batteries much higher than the ship; in other words, much is to be apprehended from what naval and military men term "plunging shots." Now this will necessarily be the great characteristic of the projectiles launched against, or rather upon, our ships from the lofty casemated

Russian land fortifications. It is easy to picture the consequences of these "plunging" missiles falling on a vessel's deck, crashing through which they will sink, lower and lower downward still, until their force is exhausted. If the war continues long there will doubtless be ample scope for the "Volcano" to display the utility of its appliances, and much time will be saved by our ships having repairs executed on the spot, instead of being compelled to return to England, as has hitherto been the practice.

CAPTAIN GREEN AND HIS CREW.

No national compact is now more indissolubly cemented than the union of England and Scotland; but it was long unpopular in the latter country, from causes which had been for many previous years in operation. There had, indeed, been no war between the countries since the time of James v of Scotland; but the events of the two subsequent reigns were not calculated to soothe animosities, and on the borders, predatory inroads of a warlike character continued nearly till the union of the crowns.*

That event increased these hostile feelings. Deprived of the residence of her sovereign, and inferior in wealth and population, Scotland was ranked in all respects below her southern neighbour; and down to the time of the revolution her jealousy of English influence was unceasing. These feelings were soon afterwards roused to frenzy by the failure of the Scotch expedition to Darien—a measure rashly undertaken and ill conducted, but bold in its conception and exceedingly popular.† The opposition it met with from England, if not the cause of its disasters, greatly aggravated their consequences; and king William III has not escaped severe, and apparently just animadversion, for his disingenuous usage on that occasion of his Scotch, and his open partiality to his English subjects.

The Scotch harboured, in consequence, a deep spirit of revenge. "The feeling of indignation," it is said,‡ "was almost nationally unanimous, and the lower classes, down to the lowest street rabble of Glasgow and Edinburgh, joined in the general shout, that the nation had been sacrificed to the greed of the English trader, and the ambition of the revolution monarch." An opportunity was eagerly sought for giving vent to this resentment, and was found, in no very dignified way, in the case of a poor English ship-master and his crew. Accounts of it have been long public; but the whole circumstances were only known lately, when a discovery was made by Mr. Burton, of the Scotch bar, of the papers of the Darien Company, in an old chest in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh. In his book, to which we have already made reference, a full statement of the case is given, and

It cannot be denied that science has greatly increased the effectiveness of warlike weapons, and aggravated their powers of destroying human life. In this sense, certainly, warfare may be called less humane than in days of yore. In a hundred other respects, however, religious and other influences have so mitigated the ferocities of the combatants, and multiplied amenities between them, as in a comparative sense at least to justify the application of the term which our correspondent reprobates.—ED.

* It was very shortly before the death of queen Elizabeth that the rescue was made of "Kilmont Willie," from the castle of Carlisle, by a small band of Scotch borderers (led by the chief of Buccleuch), with a daring and a skill which have few parallels in the episodes of history.

† Its projector was William Paterson, the framer of the Bank of England.

‡ Narratives from "Criminal Trials in Scotland," by John Hill Burton. London, 1852.

to it we are indebted for a considerable portion of the following detail.

The Darien Company had an exclusive right to trade from Scotland to the East Indies, and for that purpose had a vessel called "The Annandale," fitted up in England, engaging an English commander and a few English sailors. It seems to have been destined direct for India; but to avoid a quarrel with the English East India Company, it was, in the first instance, cleared out for Scotland. The proprietors differed, however, with the commander, and he having supplied the English company with information to suit their views, the ship was boarded in the Downs by custom-house officers and English men-of-wars men, and its cargo, which was said to be very valuable, put under custody. The supercargo produced Queen Anne's commission, but it, and the intercession of the Scotch ministers, were unavailing, the ship and cargo being judicially condemned.

Just at this time, an English ship called "The Worcester" was driven into the Frith of Forth by stress of weather, and took refuge in Leith Roads. It was whispered that she was the property of the company at whose instance "The Annandale" had been forfeited; and "as the rumour grew," says Mr. Burton, "people exulted in the retributive providence that had sent the vessel to the very spot where it could be the instrument of revenging the national wrongs." Its seizure was effected by the secretary of the Darien Company, with much cleverness and cunning, he having contrived to get conveyed on board himself and eleven assistants, in different detachments, and at considerable intervals, under the guise of visitors from curiosity, who met in the ship as if by accident. The captain and crew, unsuspecting of the object, and plied with liquor, made but a feeble resistance, when at a given signal they were attacked and overpowered. "I am persuaded," says the secretary, "you'd think the whole a most complete scene of a comedy; and to conclude the story, I may say the ship was at last taken with a Scotch song." She was conducted to the harbour of Burnt Island (a burgh in Fife, nearly opposite to Leith), and measures being begun in the Scotch courts, for condemning her as a lawful capture by reprisal, sentence of condemnation was easily obtained.

It would have been well had these proceedings on either side (however indefensible) brought matters to a close; but unfortunately it was otherwise. A ship of the Darien Company's, called (rather inaptly) the "Speedy Return," of which a captain Drummond, one of their most distinguished officers, was supercargo, had been missing for three years, and there were rumours that she had been captured by pirates and her crew murdered. Nothing could be more acceptable to the Scotch than to find a colour of truth for these rumours, in the shape of an imputation on Englishmen, and the meddling Darien secretary readily supplied the means. "By the transient view," he says, "I have already had of the captain (Green's) books and papers, I have reason to suspect him of very unwarrantable practices." What could be more appropriate than to identify these "unwarrantable practices" with the capture of the "Speedy Return" and the murder of her ship's company?

Everything was raked together which could make this accusation plausible; surmise added to surmise, and suspicion to suspicion, till it was resolved to indict captain Green and his crew on a charge of piracy and murder.

The trial (which took place at Edinburgh in March, 1705) is fully reported in the "State Trials," vol. xiv, and a correct abridgment of the evidence is given in Hugo Arnot's "Collection of Criminal Trials in Scotland." To these we would refer such of our readers as may wish to see a more minute detail of the trial, and shall confine ourselves here to a very brief account of it.*

The indictment charges, that Green and his crew having sailed from England in "The Worcester," on pretence of "merchandizing towards the East Indies" they, early in 1703, met on the Malabar coast, with another ship bearing a red flag and having English or Scots aboard—at least such as spoke the English language—and that, without any lawful cause, they attacked the ship, overcame and boarded her, "and having seized her men, they killed them and threw them overboard, carried away the goods that were aboard, and then disposed of the said ship by selling her ashore." It was not ventured to be said that the ship was Drummond's, nor was she named or even described in any way; and besides the vagueness of the charge itself—so vague indeed that it was obviously impracticable to meet it—the evidence brought in its support was extremely inconclusive. One witness only, a black man, cook's mate of "The Worcester," swore directly to the fact of the capture, at which he stated he was present and was wounded; and there is something, perhaps a little better than hearsay, in the testimony of the surgeon as to the sale of the captured ship and its cargo; but of the murder of the crew there is no legal proof, or rather, it may be said, no proof whatever. The same black cook states, no doubt, that when captain Green and part of the crew of "The Worcester" came on board the captured vessel, they "did take up the crew of the said ship from under deck, killed them with hatchets, and threw them overboard;" but he does not say that he saw this; and it is clear, indeed, that he did not—while there is no other evidence which would be held as sufficient, we do not say by a court of law, but by any man of ordinary understanding, to convict Green and his crew on either of the charges.

The rest of the proof consisted of little else than what may be justly characterised as mere vague generalities unsuited to the solemnity of a court of justice; we mean expressions which were sworn to as having been used by some of Green's crew, one of whom, for instance, said, when confessedly under a fit of melancholy induced by hard drinking: "It is a wonder, since we did not sink at sea, that God did not make the ground open and

* To English readers, the right of a Scotch court to try an alleged offence committed by Englishmen in the East Indies, may appear very questionable; but at a much later period an instance of the same kind occurred. Two foreigners, called Heaman and Gautier were in November 1821 tried and convicted by the Scotch court of Admiralty at Edinburgh and afterwards executed on the sands of Leith for piracy, and murder on board of a ship on a voyage from Gibraltar to Bahia. The culprits had run the vessel ashore on one of the Hebrides, where they were seized by the authorities of the island.

swallow us up when we are come ashore, for the wickedness that has been committed during this last voyage ;" and another said : " If what the mate had done during the voyage were known, he deserved to be burned in oil for it." This was bolstered up by proving that Green had corresponded with his ship's owners in cipher (a circumstance not necessarily inferring any crime), and that his mate had at one time been in possession of a seal with the Scotch company's arms on it.

No British jury in the present day, and none even then, had they not been actuated by gross prejudice, could have convicted the accused on evidence of such a nature. Yet a majority of this jury found, " that there is one clear witness as to the piracy, robbery, and murder, and that there are accumulated and concurring presumptions proven for the piracy and robbery," and on this verdict sentence of death was passed on Green and thirteen of his crew.

The prosecutors seem to have felt, notwithstanding, that something was still wanting to justify the verdict and sentence ; and three of the convicts were afterwards induced to confess, in a judicial form, that the captain and crew were guilty of the crimes charged. It seems to us unaccountable that so acute a writer as Mr. Arnot should have thought these confessions at all worthy of credit, seeing that they were given by men under sentence of death, with the obvious hope of gratifying the prosecutors, and so saving their own lives. One of them went so far as to state explicitly, that the captured ship was Drummond's and that he had heard captain Green say so ; on which affidavits were sent from England to show that Drummond's vessel had been lost, not in the East Indies, but on the coast of Madagascar—a statement which, as will be seen afterwards, received a singular and complete verification.

These proceedings created much alarm and indignation in England. Secretary Johnston of Warriston writing from thence to a friend in Scotland says, " Somers * says he knows not the laws of Scotland, but that the proceedings are illegal according to all other laws that he knows." The English ministers of queen Anne took up the subject with apparent seriousness, and procured a reprieve of the execution ; but they seem to have acted under a dread that, were a pardon granted, the feeling of irritation in Scotland, already so strong, might be increased to an extent with which they could not grapple, and their efforts to save the prisoners were feeble and undecided. They left the subject much in the hands of the Scotch privy council, and on the day before the reprieve expired, that body had to determine whether or not the law should take its course. In Scotland the excitement continued excessive. People flocked to Edinburgh from all parts of the country, and the council, perplexed between a sense of what was due to justice, and fears for their own personal safety, would come to no determination. But, as Mr. Burton remarks, " the mere neutrality was fatal, for their previous decision, which appointed the convicts to be executed next day, remained unaltered."

On the day of the execution (11th of April) the High-street of Edinburgh was filled by a threatening mob, which swarmed in front of the chamber where the privy council was assembled. It was known that a communication had come from the English court, containing some further documents on which to ground a pardon : and particularly, affidavits bearing the latest news from India which made no mention of any piracy like that in question. But these were disregarded, and orders were issued by the council for the immediate execution of Green, his mate, and his gunner. The lives of the rest were spared, and they were soon afterwards pardoned, it being thought that the sacrifice of these three was sufficient to quench the public cry for vengeance.

The mob learned the resolution of the council with a savage joy ; and after being narrowly foiled in an attempt to kill the lord chancellor as he returned from the deliberation, they hurried to the spectacle of the execution on the sands of Leith. Some days previously, the captain and mate had published a paper called their last speech, in which, after saying " We are condemned as pirates and murderers on a coast far distant from this," they asked with truth, " Is there any of you who wants either a friend whom we have murdered, or whose goods we have taken ?" But any appeal like this was then worse than hopeless. " Yet," says Mr. Burton, " when the tragedy was completed—and from many points of hilly Edinburgh the bodies of the victims might be seen swinging on the sands—the national vengeance was more than satiated, and many of those who had been foremost in the strife were afraid to think of what they had done."

Not many years afterwards the truth began to appear. The gross injustice of the revolting proceeding came to be exposed beyond contradiction, and the danger was shown of ever yielding to the " *civium ardor prava jubentium*." The first public hint was given in the British parliament by the celebrated Duncan Forbes, who said that " letters had come from the captain for whose murder, and from the very ship for whose capture the unfortunate persons suffered, informing their friends that they were all safe ; that he believed that Green had suffered for no other crime than that of being an Englishman, at a period of strong national animosity ; and that, as a testimony of his feelings, he had himself borne the convict's head to the grave." This, as we have already said, was confirmed by very striking evidence subsequently obtained.

In the affidavits which, as we have mentioned, were transmitted to the privy council before the execution, it was stated that the vessel of which Drummond was supercargo had sailed from Britain in May 1701, and reached Madagascar. In 1729 there was published* " Robert Drury's Adventures during his Captivity" in that island ; in which he states that, when but a youth of fourteen, he was shipwrecked on the Madagascar coast, with the rest of the crew of the ship " Degrave," where he found Captain Drummond, " a Scotchman," who, he says, was left ashore on his vessel being taken by pirates, and was accompanied by a

* Some time lord chancellor, and the framer of the Revolution Settlement.

captain Stewart. Drummond appears to have been a man of fierce temper, and to have had several quarrels with the king of that district of the island; in which disputes Drummond was supported by Stewart and a person of the name of Bembo. "I understood," says Drury, "that Stewart and Bembo got to England, but captain Drummond never got off the island, he being killed; though of the particular manner and occasion I was not informed. They said that this captain Drummond was the very same man for whose murder, and his crew, one captain Green, commander of an East India ship, was hanged in Scotland." In confirmation of this, there is in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1769, a curious piece of incidental evidence connected with the Bembo referred to in Drury's statement. He appears to have been a son of the celebrated admiral Benbow; and the author of the notice to which we refer, expresses his regret at the accidental loss of a memoir written by him. The most curious and interesting part of this memoir "was that in which he gave an account of the crew of the 'Degrave,' East Indiaman, seizing after their shipwreck a black king, his queen, and son, in Madagascar, and marching with them over part of the island, and of his escaping from his companion to Port Dauphine." And then referring to Drury's work, the writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine" adds: "In Benbow's narrative is a strange confirmation of the truth of Drury's journal, with which, so far as it went, it exactly tallied."

We now willingly bring this painful narrative to a close. That Green and his crew were guilty in India of taking advantage of the armed strength of their own ship for capturing and plundering some weaker vessel, seems very probable—and at that period such proceedings, we fear, were not uncommon in these distant seas—but whatever grounds there are for this suspicion, there was no crime legally proved against them; and that with which they were substantially meant to be charged, and for which three of them were put to death, was, as we have shown, entirely disproved and found to be a fiction. Improbable as it may seem, we are compelled to confess that forty years afterwards, and in the same county of Scotland, a still more distressing tragedy was enacted in the noted case of James Stewart, of Aucham, where the animosities which originated in the rebellion of 1745, led to what has been justly stigmatized as a judicial murder; but it is gratifying to think that we live in happier times, and that no case in the United Kingdom could now be tried by any jury who could possibly act under such bias and partiality as marked that which condemned captain Green and his crew.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN IN NORWAY, JULY 28, 1851.

THE twenty-eighth of July, 1851, is now some years old; it has already joined the years before the flood; yet to me its remembrance is as yesterday. I reckon up the time, and can hardly believe it is three years ago since I witnessed the most impressive, solemn, and beautiful vision I ever beheld, or perhaps ever shall behold, in our

world—the grand spectacle of the total eclipse of the sun, witnessed too as it was in the region where of all others it was to be seen to most advantage—among the singular and magnificent scenery of Norway.

I have often felt, and sometimes said, that a remarkably good fortune attends me on my travels; or might I not venture to call it rather, a singularly kind providence, which has often so ordered matters for one in all things dependent on its bounty, that just such a conjuncture has occurred as tended to favour the purposes I had in view in making my journeys. I never yet travelled without a purpose; and when we have one in view which we can ask God to bless, it is not presumption that leads us to offer to him the thanks of a grateful heart for its accomplishment.

Many persons were going to Norway to see the solar eclipse of July, 1851. Scientific men, and especially astronomers from all lands, were flocking thither. I had happened to return to Christiana, from a ramble in the country parts of Norway, precisely on the 27th of July, 1851, and found a note awaiting me from our kind consul-general, Mr. Crowe, inviting me to witness the eclipse of the sun from his gardens on the following day. The house was about an English mile from the Norwegian capital, and nothing can be more charming than its situation, or better adapted to give all the effect that scenery and position can give, to such interesting phenomena as that which we expected. The gardens are picturesquely disposed, and the prospects they command are extensive and varied. From one spot the view over the renowned Christiana fiord, with its numerous islands, curious fir-covered rocks, and elevated opposite banks, is most exquisite; lovely at sunrise and sunset; lovely when the sun is burning in the fervid noon-tide heat of a short northern summer; but how lovely when that sun was seen in the strange preternatural aspect it assumed on the 28th of July, 1851.

The spot I allude to is a high grassy mound, simple and fair as if nature itself had made it, and isolated by a screen of flowering shrubs from all view but the one I have mentioned over the fiord. The house is built on the site of a nunnery, destroyed at the time of the Reformation, though it is said that the nuns still occasionally appear there in the form of two black cats. The reverse is my case, for the place haunts me; I see it still, I shall see it always, as I saw it under the strange influence of the solar eclipse. That eclipse, it was predicted, would be total at, I think, twenty minutes past two; I reached Mr. Crowe's at one o'clock and found each one of the family already occupying a post of observation. In the yard, the merry-hearted child of the household, a young lady who glories in being a true-born Laplander, was commissioned to make observations on the behaviour of calves, pigs, and such-like animals; another was to note the conduct of geese, turkeys, and poultry in general. On the open gravel walk, leading from that yard, an English astronomer had planted his glass, and was already kneeling on one knee before it, considerably below the level of the observatory, which rose immediately beyond the garden bounds, and from whence many an anxious eye was directed to the flitting clouds

that threatened to obscure the spectacle we expected. In the flower garden, further on, a pretty girl was walking, musing, it seemed, on pleasant things, while her task was to observe the influence of a solar eclipse on plants and flowers. On my favourite grassy mound a young man was stretched at length, fancying himself intent on taking observations regarding the general aspect of the sky and scenery.

Having selected my own post of contemplation, and having expressly declined to take observations, I left it soon, and went to see an interesting invalid within the house. I was engaged in a conversation which filled my mind with thoughts that banished even those of the eclipse—she talked about death—of the time when the heavens shall pass away as a scroll, when the sun and the moon shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. This was the subject of our discourse, when a hurrying message came, summoning me to return to the gardens instantly.

"Come with me," I cried to the invalid; "come and see the eclipse: it will do you good."

"I dare not," she said, shrinking from my hand; "the sun will be darkened."

She took a white shawl, however, and, throwing it over head and shoulders, came out with me and sat in a garden chair. She was a young wife and mother, in the last stage, it seemed then, of consumption, and full of tender care for what she had to leave, as well as of anxiety for what she had to go to. She trembled then for her infant daughter that was to be left motherless; but the babe—that plump and rosy babe—was soon afterwards taken up by the good Shepherd into the fold, while the fearing and doubting mother was left alone in the wilderness she dreaded for her child. She trembled for it to be left motherless; she lived to see herself left childless.

Wan, wasted, and pallid, she sat on a chair just facing the sun, which already began to assume an ominous aspect. She gazed on it solemnly, as if it were about to disappear for ever from her bodily eyes. Already the dark body that was to eclipse it—the moon, the bright planet of our nights, which was now passing between us and the sun—was visibly seen to be contracting its apparent orb. The clouds we had dreaded quite passed away, the sky was clear, and our view unimpeded; but that remarkable expression of holy writ came to my mind: "The sun shall be ashamed." Just so it appeared to be—ashamed, blushing, shrinking, out of countenance, it was contracting and retiring, and, as it were, condensing itself, as if ashamed or afraid. A dark spot appeared first on its rim, and then began to be perceptible over its bright surface, as the shadow of a man's hand extending onwards. Its progress was distinct to the naked eye. A gloom was gathering over the sky; a shadow was stealing over the earth. The waters of the beautiful fiord reflected it; their sunny glow was gone; it was not the least like the shadowing of a murky cloud—not the least like the gloom of a gathering storm. There was a silence in the air, a silence in all nature; a gloom, with a sort of light in it, seemed to come at first slowly, very slowly on. We looked up and around; we doubted, as if taken by surprise; we asked each other if it did not grow dark, yet we saw the still

shrinking sun, the still advancing body that crept over it. No glass was needed; its progress was a visible thing. Yet—how it was I know not, for it will easily be seen that my description is not a scientific one—the more the dark body progressed between us and the sun, the more sensibly rapid did its progress appear; the more deeply the gloom drew on, the faster did it seem to move. The predicted hour of the total eclipse was at hand, and with it came the palpable darkness, on, on—faster, faster, faster—visibly, almost tangibly sweeping on—a darkness that might be felt, unlike anything I ever saw; a moving darkness, rushing on as if borne by the wings of the wind, while not a breath of air was stirring.

Our very hearts stood still: nature grew silent: the song of birds ceased: animals huddled together: all creatures cowered in silence. The darkness swept over us, wrapped its wings around us; yet it was not night; it was not like the absence of daylight; a strange greenish-yellow hue mingled in the gloom, and gave it a supernatural aspect. The horizon, far off, encircling the waters of the widely-spread fiord, wore a distinct belt of that greenish-yellow hue; the vegetation around us assumed the same; the human faces I looked on reflected it.

The fiord, with its numerous rocky islets, was wrapped in that strange pall, and through the yellow gloom rose up tall pines from the rocky isles, like gigantic spectres out of chaos, wearing a paler, yellower shade than the unnatural darkness around them. All was unearthly seeming, but unspeakably grand, and full of solemnity, and even awe. In that moment my knees involuntarily bent to the earth. The mighty power of Almighty God was felt, and constrained the movement.

The young fresh bloom on youthful cheeks had paled; impressed with the force of the words, "All faces shall gather blackness," I turned to look at the invalid. The white shawl still shrouded her livid countenance; her figure was inclined forward; her hands clasped on her breast; her large tearful eyes fixed in trembling awe on the still darkening orb. It was a painter's model for the scene of the last day; it might seem the form of one who had burst the cerements of the tomb before the consummation of the final doom; who was looking on trembling, yet still living.

Quickly as the darkness seemed to travel, it moved not faster than the thoughts and impressions of the human mind: the darkness might not have lasted more than a minute, but the vision of the mind is a wonderful thing, and the picture it took in was as full, as minute, as distinct, as if it had had an hour's time for its survey. At the moment I was only conscious of feeling, not of seeing or observing; but the mental retina easily reproduces what the bodily eyes have scarcely rested upon, so that I can vividly recall the scene, although at the moment I thought little of effects, and reasoned not at all upon causes. The moving hand of Almighty Power was all I felt, was all my soul acknowledged.

That tension of the heart and mind passed away; the east soon reddened as with new-born day; the sky was streaked with silver and crimson; gold soon shone over both. The wings of darkness

were upraised ; we could think we saw them rising ; the darkness had not gathered round us gradually, it had swept on from one quarter of the heavens to the other ; we saw it coming to us from one side while the other was light, but now it seemed to rise up from the earth at once ; it lifted its dark wings and gathered itself up, and moved away, and we saw not whither it went. The dark body that caused it—the silver moon, that at other times gives light upon the earth—continued her travels, undisturbed perhaps by the commotion she caused among some of the children of men, by her transit between them and the sun. A few moments, and sea and sky and land were themselves again. The belt of unnatural yellow faded from the horizon ; the foliage resumed its colour ; some little flowers opened out again their winking petals ; the fir trees on the fiord were yellow spectres no longer : the birds started from their hiding places, and flew in short and anxious circles, chattering vociferously, and making their own astronomical observations on the extraordinary event that had come to pass in their time ; and the merry young Laplander affirmed that the calves she had been set to observe raised up the heads they had bent down, and the pigs set up their tails, and ran squeaking through the yard.

We, too, began to utter words ; but when we first looked at each other, tears were trembling on some faces. Wonderful Creator of all things ! who could refuse to adore thee in the things thou hast made—even in the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained ? Amid the vast and splendid scenery of Norway, looking over the diversified beauties of the singular fiord, the effect of that total eclipse of the sun in its progress, duration, and passing away, was such as to stamp the scene of a few minutes in an indelible picture on the canvass of memory—a picture which cannot be transferred to paper, nor adequately described in words, but which, when the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of mind reproduces it to myself, I bless God for having been permitted to see.

On my return to the hotel, where I stayed in Christiana, I asked its proprietor if he had gone out to see the eclipse. "I saw it in the yard," he said ; "it grew very dark there."

Something darker than usual, in the always dark and dirty yard round which his hotel was built in the form of a square, was all that was visible to him, and to the persons who sat sipping coffee there, of that great and rare spectacle which numbers had come from far to behold. Some of the good old Norwegians, indeed, thought it quite profane to assert beforehand that the sun would be darkened at midday, and the fact that such an assertion was made at the precise time when such a monstrous thing as a railroad was also going to be made in "old Norway," caused many comments on the audacious spirit of the times, which were amusingly characteristic of a people so simply attached to their own primitive ways and opinions as the Norwegians are.

SELFWILL is so ardent and active, that it will break a world to pieces to make a stool to sit on.

OCCUPATION cures one half of life's troubles and mitigates the remainder.

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS OF VICTORIA.

FROM a work lately published on the colony of Victoria, from the pen of Mr. W. Westgarth, the "Literary Gazette" has extracted some interesting particulars relative to the newspaper press of Melbourne.

From it we learn that in 1838 a manuscript gazette was issued, under the auspices of Mr. Fawkner, called "The Settlement," with commercial advertisements and paragraphs of local intelligence. When the printing machinery arrived from England, the paper was published under the name of "The Melbourne Advertiser." Before 1840, "The Port Phillip Gazette" and "Port Phillip Herald," both semi-weekly papers, were commenced. In 1849, there were three daily papers in Melbourne, the population then being only 18,000. Of one of these, "The Argus," which Mr. Westgarth says, in point of dimensions, number of advertisements, and extent of circulation, may worthily be called "The Times" of the southern hemisphere, a detailed account is given, as forming a significant and interesting leaf in colonial history.

"The Argus" was founded in October, 1848, and superseded "The Melbourne Argus," a paper established shortly before. The paper was at this time in a small and rather a declining way, having with a semi-weekly publication a circulation of 625 copies. The advertisements yielded about 13*l.* weekly, and the weekly expenses were about 30*l.* The field was at this time occupied by two other papers, published daily, and superior to their young rival in circulation and advertisements. In June, 1849, the "Argus" assumed a daily issue, and towards the end of 1851, amidst a contentious editorial rivalry, it was generally considered to have attained the first position. The advertisements then yielded 80*l.* weekly, and the circulation had risen to 1500.

The great era of the gold discoveries had now overtaken Australia, and with it there fell upon the press, in a pre-eminent degree, all those expenses and difficulties that we have elsewhere had occasion to notice in the other colonial vocations. One of the rival broadsheets now retired from the contest, under the pressure alike of these reigning troubles and of a considerable offer for goodwill and material from the "Argus" proprietors. The paper thus discontinued was the representative of the original "Melbourne Advertiser," which had successively adopted the titles of "The Port Phillip Patriot," and "The Daily News," under which latter denomination it fell into the arms of the rising "Argus," whose popular sympathies and extreme democratic politics were now extending its importance with a rapidity that already imparted a view of its approaching destiny.

Three thousand pounds had been paid for the "Daily News," which left to its purchasers about 600 new subscribers, a considerable addition of advertisements, and, above all, the advantage of a fast printing machine, by which 1000 copies per hour could be thrown off. The importance of the last addition was soon manifest. The effects of the gold were overspreading the colony with a perfect avalanche of commercial and social necessities, all seeking their various objects through the

medium of the local press. In May, 1852, the weekly receipts for advertising had risen to between 250*l.* and 300*l.*, and the circulation to 5000.

The "Argus" was now reputed to stand second only to the "Times" and "Advertiser" of the metropolis in the British dominions. It had already passed all its Australian contemporaries, including the "Sydney and Morning Herald," a long established daily paper, whose rare temper for a colonial publication had given it a high status, and the large circulation, as was then understood, of 3500 to 4000 copies. At this time a reduction was made in the price of the "Argus" to the extent of one-third, on the spirited view that a still more general diffusion would occasion an enlarged advertising. This change proved eminently successful. In July of the same year, only two months afterwards, the paper doubled its size, and in the following February another sheet was still added. The weekly receipts for advertisements had now reached 800*l.*

The circulation had increased so rapidly of late, that at this time the mechanical appliances of the colony were scarcely adequate to reach the very extreme of demand. Ten thousand five hundred copies were thrown off daily, and the possibilities of further circulation were held in abeyance until the office was possessed of more adequate appliances. This daily circulation was superior to that of three leading metropolitan papers, according to stamp office data, namely, the "Daily News," the "Morning Herald," and the "Morning Chronicle" combined.

The "Argus" was at this time printed by means of four different machines, which were in almost constant operation. The hands employed in all departments amounted to one hundred and forty. As some specimen of the expenses attending the colonial press, it may be remarked that while compositors are usually paid in Britain at the rate of 8*d.* or 9*d.* "per thousand" the payment in the "Argus" office is 2*s.* per thousand. The price of this immense paper, with its voluminous reading matter, commercial and shipping intelligence, and upwards of 2000 advertisements, is three halfpence to each town subscriber, whose paper is delivered each morning at his residence. The cost of the mere paper, laid down in the colony, was at this time stated to be over 1*1/2**d.* per copy, and the expenses were estimated at 1*1/2**d.* more. On the occasion of each of the semi-weekly mail days, when editions for the country were further required, it was computed that sixteen miles of paper of the ordinary newspaper width were issued from the office; and this mass being printed as usual on both sides, it thus formed thirty-two miles of printing.

This newspaper has all the appearance of still maintaining unimpaired that rapid progression I have indicated, to which, indeed, a more free development will be shortly given by the aid of superior mechanical appliances, and by adequate supplies of paper, which were ever falling short of the voracious demands, and which now form in the course of a year a quantity sufficient to freight entirely one of that immense fleet of shipping whose departure to her important offshoots of Australia is now a daily spectacle to the mother country.

THE TESTING HOUR.

THE final scene of the REV. THOMAS SCOTT, the well-known commentator, was remarkably instructive. His early life is generally known by means of his own pamphlet, "The Force of Truth." "On Saturday, March 10th, 1821, he was seized with inflammatory fever. The spiritual habit of his mind, under the anguish of bodily sufferings, which clouded at times his apprehensions of his own state before God, may be judged of by such expressions as these: 'I think nothing of my bodily pain; my soul is all; I trust all will end well; but it is a dreadful conflict; I fear, I hope, I tremble, I pray.—Oh! to enter eternity with one doubt upon the mind! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Pity, pity, pity, Lord—deliver me, Lord—suffer not Satan to prevail.' He was not always thus clouded. 'I do not fear death,' said he; 'I desire to depart if it be the Lord's will; but I want to do my duty; I would not shorten my sufferings by the least sin.' He asked at another time, 'When will this end?' and on his son answering, 'In God's good time,' 'Ah!' he replied, 'that is a good expression; I thank you for it.—In God's good time,' and he repeated it frequently to the close of his sickness.

"Referring to his writings, he said, 'Posthumous reputation!—it is the veriest bubble with which the devil ever deluded a wretched mortal; but posthumous usefulness, in that there is indeed something! That was what Moses desired, and Joshua and David, and the prophets, the apostles, Paul and Peter and John, and most of all the Lord Jesus.' A message having been communicated to him from a friend, which included something expressive of the great benefits his writings had produced to the church, he stopped the speaker, and said, 'Now, this does me harm. The last sermon I preached, or something like a sermon, was from the words of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" I take them to myself, I am a sinner; my more, not merely a sinner, but the sinner, the chief of sinners; and if God do but save me, all the glory and praise shall be his.'

"When dying, he appeared to be lost in prayer, 'But,' says his friend, in whose arms he expired, 'just at the moment when he reclined his head on my breast, the expression of his countenance suddenly changed from that of prayer, and indicated, as I conceived, a transition to feelings of admiring and adoring praise, with a calmness and peace which is quite inexpressible. The idea strongly impressed upon my mind was, that the veil which intercepts eternal things from our view was removed, and that, like Stephen, he saw things invisible to mortal eye.' He died on Monday, April 16th, 1821, in the seventy-fifth year of his age."*

The death-bed of the late REV. R. HALL of Leicester, and afterwards of Bristol, was in full accordance with his simple piety, and with that real humility which has so often characterized true genius. "When he first announced his apprehension that he should never again minister among his people, he immediately added, 'But I am in God's hands, and I rejoice that I am. I am God's creature, at his disposal for life or death, and that is a great mercy.'" Again, "I fear pain more than death. If I could die easily, I think I would go rather than stay; for I have seen enough of this world, and have a humble hope." The former part of this sentence may remind the reader of a remark made by John Howe to his son, a physician, who was lancing his leg:—"I am not afraid of dying, but I am afraid of pain." The latter clause is great in its simplicity.—"Life's Last Hours," published by the Religious Tract Society.

* From Sermons occasioned by his death, by Rev. D. Wilson, A.M., now Dr. Wilson, bishop of Calcutta.

Varieties.

CORRUPTION OF RUSSIAN FUNCTIONARIES AND DETECTION BY THE EMPEROR.—“In returning to St. Petersburg in 1825, just after the accession of the emperor Nicholas,” says Dr. Lee (a family physician to prince Woronoff), “I met the Rev. Dr. Paterson, who, as a missionary, had traversed the Crimea and Caucasus as far as Tiflis. Dr. Paterson informed me of a new means which the emperor has taken to discover the abuses which prevail in the different public offices. Two weeks ago a poor man presented a petition to one of the secretaries of general Dakin, with the view that it should be laid before the emperor. The man returned after a time and inquired if it had been presented, when the secretary told him that nothing could be done unless he would advance 2000 roubles. The poor man said that he had not 2000 copecks, but that he would try to obtain it. He contrived by some means to get a petition presented directly into the hands of the emperor, stating his case and the corruption of the secretary. The business was put into the hands of the count Kutousoff. Two thousand roubles were given to the poor man, who presented them to the secretary. The numbers of the notes were marked, and immediately after the man had announced to count Kutousoff that they were accepted, he sent a guard to arrest the secretary. At first he denied it, but on being told that the governor knew even the numbers of the notes he had received, he confessed, or rather the money was found upon his person. The emperor ordered a trial, to be finished in three days. He was convicted, sentenced to be degraded, rendered incapable of ever holding any public office, and sent to Siberia; all except the latter part of the sentence he suffered. Dr. Paterson told me that the emperor had organized a secret police for the purpose of collecting information respecting these abuses, and of everything that is said respecting himself and the government, an account of which is to be presented to him without the names of the individuals whose opinions are related. A very excellent man is said to be at the head of this new species of police or inquisition.”

THE BLACK SEA.—The Black Sea is an inland basin with a margin of coast generally elevated and rocky, having a transverse diameter of about 650 miles from west to east, a conjugate one of more than 300, and an area of 172,000 square miles. Its modern name is supposed to originate from the dense fogs which occasionally cover it, or the dangers of its navigation arising from these fogs: at all events, it was much dreaded by the ancients, who placed their Cimmerian land of utter darkness on its northern shores. Besides the fresh water from Asia Minor, it receives some of the largest rivers in Europe, including the Danube, Dnieper, and Dniester, the Don, and the Kouban; its waters are in consequence only brackish; and it is singular that, with such a large and constant accession of fresh streams continually pouring into it, any saltiness should be retained. Its depth in general is great, no bottom being struck with 150 fathoms of line; but off the mouth of the Danube the water deepens very gradually, and nearly as much so from Serpent’s Isle by Odessa to the Crimea. The streams of the great rivers produce strong currents, particularly in the beginning of summer, when they are increased by the melting of the snows; and when strong winds act against these flowings, a chopping sea is produced, which in foggy weather is dangerous to small craft. Independently, however, of such chances, the Black Sea is free from any dangers; having, with a trivial exception or two, neither islands, rocks, nor reefs in the general track of navigation: and almost everywhere there are excellent anchorages, affording good riding for the largest ships. Its trade consists of grain, wine, timber, charcoal, pitch, potash, fish, caviar, isinglass, shagreen, salted provisions, cheese, poultry, butter, wool, hides, hemp, tallow, honey, tobacco, salt, iron, copper, and saltpetre; but, especially corn.

It seems agreed among cosmogonists, that the Black Sea, at a remote period, extended much further to the east and north than it now does, occupying the whole of the vast plains and steppes that surround the Caspian and the Sea of Aral, neither of which had then a separate exist-

ence; the difference of their levels having arisen at later periods. Their depth must probably alter materially, since the beds of the rivers above mentioned are charged with an extraordinary quantity of sand and *slime*, which from the rapidity of their course they hold in suspension till they approach the sea, where, spreading over a wider area, and flowing in a more gentle current, they deposit the substances brought down, so gradually that the elevation of their beds is almost imperceptible. Polybius, who states this as a cause for predicting the filling up of the Euxine in process of time, describes a shoal one thousand stadia in length before the mouth of the Ister, at one day’s sail from the land: this having long since disappeared, has no doubt become a part of the delta of the Danube. The Sea of Azof has manifestly contracted its boundaries.—*Admiral Smyth.*

THE PENALTY OF TRUTH-TELLING IN RUSSIA.—The following humorous incident, in connection with the famous military colonies founded by Alexander, will show the danger involved in revealing to the eye of an absolute monarch the real state of things by which he is surrounded. Dr. Lee thus narrates the circumstance:—“The military colonies please one at first sight from the order and cleanliness everywhere prevailing in them; but their population is said to be wretched in the highest degree. When the emperor Alexander was here, some years ago, he went round visiting every house; and on every table he found a dinner prepared, one of the principal articles of which consisted of a young pig roasted. The prince Volhonsky suspected there was some trick, and cut off the tail of the pig and put it in his pocket. On entering the next house the pig was presented, but without the tail, upon which prince Volhonsky said to the emperor, ‘I think this is an old friend.’ The emperor understood his meaning, when he took out the tail from his pocket and applied it to the part from which it had been removed. The emperor did not relish the jest, and it was supposed this piece of pleasantry led to his disgrace. A more effectual, though bold and dangerous, method of exposing to the emperor the deceptions carried on throughout the military colonies under count Arakcheieff could not have been adopted than that which prince Volhonsky had recourse to on this occasion. From that time count Arakcheieff became his bitter enemy.”

THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH CONTRASTED.—The following incident was, some years ago, related by baron Brunnow, late Russian ambassador at our court, to Dr. Lee, and which the latter has recorded in his work on the “Last Days of the Emperor Alexander,” etc. The anecdote, however, has previously been published. “An English nobleman and the celebrated M. de Montesquieu once met at Venice, and were comparing the English and French nations. M. de Montesquieu maintained, that the French were much more intelligent and acute than the English. The Englishman did not contradict him, although he did not give his assent entirely, being prevented by politeness from contradicting him. Every night M. de Montesquieu committed to paper what had passed during the day. On the following morning after this conversation, an Italian entered the apartments of the marquis, and said, ‘You keep a journal of what you observe, and it is disliked extremely by the government. I advise you to burn your journal immediately, otherwise you will run the risk of being thrown into prison.’ He immediately cast his journal into the fire, and it was consumed. The same evening the English nobleman waited upon him, and M. de Montesquieu related the circumstance, and expressed himself very uneasy at the thought of being subjected to imprisonment. The Englishman observed, ‘Now you see the difference between the English and French: had this happened to an Englishman he would have considered the probability of this, or at least have endeavoured to avoid it; he would certainly not have thrown his journal into the fire as you have done. I sent the Italian to see how you would act on this occasion, for the purpose of showing you the difference between the two nations.’”